Old Grouch

By H. M. EGBERT

"Old Grouch," as Randall, the treasurer, was called, was the hardest member of the corporation. This much was universally admitted. Nobody ever went to him for a raise of salary without a sinking heart, for whatever Randall did was done grudgingly.

Yet the few who were in the know were aware how deeply the acid of life had eaten into Randall's soul. His only daughter had died, five years before, just after graduating from Vassar. His only son had gone to the bad and run away from home prior to that. Once the boy had come to the father's door; but Randall had sent out a curt message by the servant that he would not see him.

Of late Randall had been conscious that he was growing old. He had wondered whether he might not have dealt with the lad more kindly. He had heard nothing of Horace since that visit, which had been shortly after his daughter's death. His wife had died years before; he was alone in the world, and his embitterment made it a gloomy one.

He was working at the office late that night, for the spring rush of business had started; then the department managers were overworked, and Randall had to check up their errors, which were numerous and annoying. Having to consult the books, he rose from his desk and went into the large bookkeepers' room. A man was leaning over a broom, his eyes closed.

"Think We Hired You to Sleep Here?"

supporting himself against the wall. It was the night watchman.

Randall went up and bellowed in his ear. Kimball started and looked at him vaguely. He had been nine months in the corporation's employment, but that did not assuage Randall's anger.

"You're a fine watchman!" bellowed the treasurer. "You can get your money in the morning!"

"Mr. Randall—" the man began to stammer.

"Not a word, now. Think we hired you to sleep here, I suppose?"

He left the discomfited man and walked back to his desk, growling. One could trust nobody. Thieves might enter while Kimball was sleeping. He forgot all about the books.

To Randall's indignation and astonishment his seat was no longer empty. A tiny, neat little girl, with flaxen curls that hung about her shoulders, was seated in his chair, scribbling all over his blotting pad. Anger rendered Randall mute.

Then the little girl looked up and smiled at him. Something in Randall's heart seemed to rise up and fill his throat. Minnie had smiled like that—and this child looked like Minnie.

"Well! Who are you?" demanded Randall gruffly.

"I'm Leonora, and I'm not a bit afraid of you," answered the child.

"How did you get here? Kimball brought you, eh?"

The child nodded. "He often brings me, only he tells me not to let you see me, because you're an old grouch."

"I guess I'm an old grouch all right," said Randall.

"But you can't make me afraid of you," said the child. "People say you're terrible. Papa says so."

"I guess I am. Somebody's got to be."

"I'd hate to be you," said Leonora.

Randall glared at her. At first he could not find words to say. He was thinking that he hated to be himself. At last he found his tongue. "Kimball!" he bellowed.

The watchman appeared. He stood looking in dismay, first at the child and then at the treasurer.

"Got any good reason for being asleep on duty?" Randall inquired.

The watchman's face flushed heavily. "I was up all last night with my sister's husband," he answered. "That's his child."

Randall began to notice that Kimball had the speech of an educated man. Strange that he had not noticed it in those nine months!

"He's getting over an attack of pneumonia," continued Kimball.

"What does he do for a living?" asked Randall; and yet he could not imagine why he was interested.

"Well, sir, like me, he was brought up in a rich home, and we were both wasters in our youth. I couldn't turn my hand to anything, and he's the same. I guess we're both sorry now. He was watchman with Wiley company till it dissolved."

"Yes, I know," Randall sneered. "Both born to better things and can't hold down a watchman's job. Here—take yourself off and take the child with you!"

They went away, the little girl shaking her hand at him and laughing. Randall, when they were gone, sat at his desk thinking. His life was passing in review before him, the empty years, the thankless years. What if he had dealt hardly with the boy?

He cursed himself for a sentimentalist. Why should these thoughts come to him now? And yet—well, he might give Kimball another chance. He might do that. He would give him that vacancy in the clerical department. And the girl! It was odd how she reminded him of Minnie. His daughter had looked just like that when she was a child.

He rose and went home, frowning, and anyone who had met him on the road would have thought he was the surliest looking man that he had encountered in many a day. But once in his room the old man paced the floor, shaking his head and conscious of the same sense of uselessness.

He could not sleep. The child was before his eyes all night. Minnie!

"Old Grouch" was at his worst next day. He refused three applications for increase of salary, scolded the department managers roundly, and made himself even more feared than usual. But at night, when the force had gone, he crept quietly out of the office, after ascertaining the night watchman's address.

He, "Old Grouch," was going to tell the man that he could come to work at eight, as usual. Poor devil of a watchman! He was not so much to blame, if his story was true!

The address was a poor street off Third avenue. Randall gazed around him in disgust as he passed through the slum. A drunken man was clinging to a post. Two shrews were scolding each other from different doorways. What a place in which to bring up a child! Suppose it had been Minnie!

At a few minutes after seven he stood before a door in a tenement building. He rang, and a tired-looking woman opened to him. The woman was unmistakably the mother of the girl. And, weary as she was, and poorly dressed, she was unmistakably a lady.

"Good evening, Mrs. Kimball," said Randall roughly. "I'm Mr. Randall, and I've called to say that your husband can have his job back."

The woman stared at him in terror. "I'm— I'm not Mrs. Kimball," she stammered, and ran back into the apartment. Randall heard her sobbing as she ran.

Then he was aware of a tiny figure at his side, and the little girl was looking up into his face.

"Old Grouch!" she lisped. "Old Grouch, come and see papa!"

It was strange that the child's touch turned his will to water. Randall suffered her to lead him by the hand.

He went into a dark passage and halted at the door of a tiny room. It was almost dark inside, but he heard the woman sobbing at the side of the man who lay there. She rose and turned and faced him.

"I am your son's wife," she said with simple dignity.

And in the dark Randall, incredulous, saw the figure upon the bed.

"I guess it was a mistake," the woman continued. "This is my little girl, and Mr. Kimball has been taking her to the office nights while my husband was ill. You didn't know, and—there is no need to stay, Mr. Randall."

Randall struck a match with trembling fingers and looked at the man on the bed. He saw the fever-flushed face of his own son, whom he had thought gone forever. And then the man's will broke. "Old Grouch" kneeled down at his side.

"Horace!" he whispered, taking his hand in his. "Horace, you will come home! I have come to take you home—you and your wife, and—and Leonora. I have wanted you—heaven knows how much," he continued. "Only I didn't know it."

The woman turned away her face. "Not now," she answered. "We do not want your forgiveness after these years."

Randall looked at his son. "Horace?" he asked.

But the sick man turned his face away and answered nothing. And then Randall felt a little hand slipped into his own.

"I'll go with you, Old Grouch!" said Leonora.

And suddenly the waters of pity gushed from the man's eyes. "God forgive me!" he cried, catching her to his breast.

In a trice the mother was sobbing in his arms. And the three, by the sick man's bed, the son and father clasping each other's hands, was the sight that met Kimball's eyes as he entered.

"Old Grouch" broke the silence.

"Get to your job, Kimball!" he bellowed. "Tomorrow I'll have something to say to you. Get to work now, or I'll—I'll discharge you!"

For he meant to keep up his reputation to the last.

Belief in Jonahs.

The belief in Jonahs is contrary to the order of the universe as man most slowly and painfully, by the use of all his spiritual faculties, has discovered that order. Whatever the explanation of extraordinary events may be, the superstitious explanation is not true. To entertain it for a moment is to enervate the mind and to misinterpret the universe. That may not be safely done even in trifles, for none of us is far enough away from the dark fears of the savage to take risks. We need to be almost superstitious in our fear of superstition, as a reformed drunkard needs to avoid wine.

For Policy's Sake.

"I noticed you maintained strict neutrality while Dubwaite and Twobble were having a warm argument about the war." "Yes." "Were you not tempted to put in a word now and then just to expose their ignorance?" "Of course I was, but for special reasons I didn't dare to open my mouth." "What were they?" "I owe Twobble some money and I expect to sell Dubwaite a piece of property and make some money."

In Woman's Realm

Individual Style of Coiffure Means Much to Woman—Old Styles of Hairdressing Are Revived—Quaint and Picturesque Costume for the Bride's Attendants.

It is the manner of dressing her hair more than by any other means, that a woman can establish distinction—an individual style in her appearance. In this one particular she can afford to be independent of fashions and adopt for herself whatever is best suited to her. But in her coiffure, as in everything else she likes a change and she may experiment with any of the new incoming styles in hair dressing in the chance of improving her appearance or by way of variety.

Along with the revival of old styles in apparel have come revivals of hairdressing from by-gone periods. The

DISTINCTION IN THE COIFFURE.

hair coiled or puffed on top of the head, with short curls at each side of the face is one arrangement that is in the experimental stage. In another the hair is combed to the top of the crown and tied there with narrow ribbon formed into a bow and ends. The hair is turned into a long upstanding puff or loop.

The most promising of coiffures recently shown calls for waved hair parted at one side and arranged in coils at the back of the crown. Three short curls are placed at one side on a level with the lobe of the ear. There are no styles in which the ears are uncovered, although in some a glimpse of

It is the privilege of the bride to select the style that shall govern in making the costumes of her maids. Just how quaint and picturesque the modes of today allow them to be may be gathered from the illustration given above. This costume looks as if it might be a faithful copy of a style worn by some demure maid who flourished a century ago. But both the gown and the bonnet are products of 1916 and, worn together, they testify to the bride's eye for the picturesque. The gown is made of taffeta.

The tight bodice with mid-Victorian shoulders is outlined with a ruffle and supported by narrow straps. It surmounts a skirt which is just one flounce after another until four of them have fully occupied that space from waist to instep. They are finished with narrow hems.

Color plays a part so important in the bridesmaids' gowns that taffeta silk is a happy choice in materials. It comes in so many beautiful colors and changeable effects. This will be appreciated by the bride whose aim is to make a fascinating background for her own incomparable white.

The old-fashioned poke bonnet shown in the picture is covered with plaited chiffon and has a soft crown.

IN THE BRIDAL PROCESSION.

it is permitted, just enough to display a jewel.

The coiffure pictured is a familiar style of the type most fashionable and is shown as developed for evening. The hair is marcelled and coiled across the back of the head just above the nape of the neck. Three short curls are pinned in below the coil.

An arrangement of the hair in a short French twist at the back surmounted by one long puff suggests the return of the psyche knot. The front hair is loosely waved and parted at the middle in a very shallow part. This is a graceful style and becoming, which is more than can be said of the most popular of off-the-face coiffures. Even to youthful faces they are somewhat trying and they lend nothing of softness to older ones.

There is a small wreath at the edge with little roses set far apart. A big and sprightly bow with long sash ends is perched at the back. So quaint a costume is suitably completed when the maid carries a basket of flowers rather than a bouquet.

The return of the always-loved big leghorn hat, trimmed with roses, to high favor, should not be overlooked by those who plan for hats that may be useful after the wedding. Wide brimmed hats for mid-summer made of georgette crepe and trimmed with flowers offer the bride a choice for her maids that is sure to please them and all those who see them.

Julia Bottomley

Silk Net Is Durable.

Silk nets, expensive, of course, but more durable than tulle, come in every color of the rainbow and every shade of the colors. They have less crisp airiness than tulle, but are very lovely, and so soft that they allow great fullness of shirt or flounces.

Made over chiffon, they must be held out by crinoline or by a petticoat, if they are to stand out; but many women like fullness without exaggerated flare or silhouette width, and a satin lining with enough satin frankly used on the outer part of the frock to raise the slip from the rank of linings is often used in place of chiffon. A bit of plain color in substantial material is, in fact, introduced upon the outside of many of the flimsiest frocks.

Velvet Collar Bands.

A band of black velvet forms part of the collar of some of the new frocks and blouses of georgette crepe or chiffon. The velvet serves admirably to give body to the collar.

HANDICRAFT FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

By A. NEELY HALL and DOROTHY PERKINS

A MALAY OR TAILLESS KITE.

The Malay is probably the most practical boys' kite ever invented.

Figure 1 shows the completed Malay, Fig. 2 the kite in flight, Fig. 3 its completed framework, and Figs. 4, 5 and 6 the details for preparing the frame sticks.

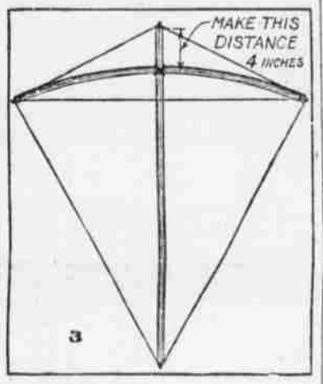
The kite has a vertical stick and a bow-stick, each of which should be 40 inches in length, about three-quar-

ters inch wide and three-eighths of an inch thick, for a medium-sized kite.

In the cutting of the sticks lays half the secret of making a kite that will fly successfully. If you live anywhere near a mill it will cost but a few cents to have sticks cut to the sizes wanted

Drive a small nail or large tack into each end of the two sticks, to fasten the framing-string to (Figs. 4 and 5), and notch the side edges of the bow-stick near each end for the attachment of the bow-string (Fig. 6).

The amount to bend the bow-stick is important. For a kite with a bow 40 inches long the distance between the string and stick should be 6 inches (Fig. 5). Use a strong twine for the

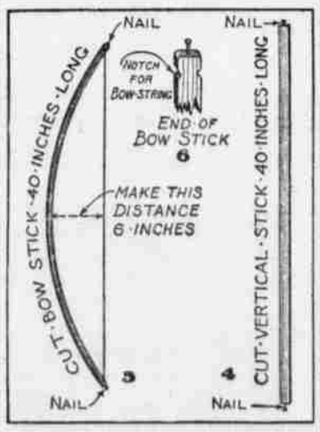


bow-string, and tie it securely to the notched ends.

Fasten the bow-stick at its exact center to the vertical stick, placing it exactly 4 inches down from the top of the vertical stick, as indicated in Fig. 3. Drive a couple of brads through the two sticks, to hold them together, and then reinforce the connection by wrapping the joint with strong linen thread, crossing it in the manner shown.

With the two sticks properly joined, connect their ends with the framing string, stretching it tightly between the sticks and tying to the end nails.

The strong light-weight brown paper now so generally used for wrapping paper makes an excellent cover-



ing. A few sheets can be purchased for the purpose at a near-by store You will likely have to paste together two or more sheets to make one large enough for your kite framework. The paper should be placed on the outer face of the bow-stick, and should be allowed a little fullness, instead of stretching it tight as on the hexagonal form of kite.

Attach a belly-band at the intersection of the bow-stick and vertical stick (Fig. 1), and make it of the right length so when held to one side it will reach to the end of the bow, as indicated in Fig. 1. Tie the flying line securely at this point, and the kite will be ready for its maiden flight.

Vox Populi.

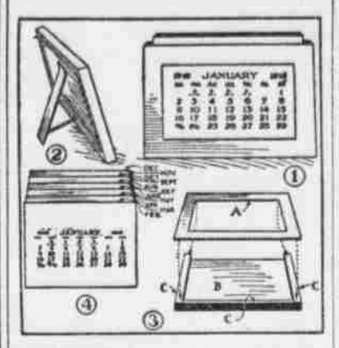
The moral standard of the people, acting somehow, is always there, whether it be high or low. At its highest, however, it does not approach the noblest motives of the individual, for it is a communal conscience, not an individual conscience. It is never more than the highest common denominator of goodness.

Uncle Eben.

"Mebbe de man dat never has to fight," said Uncle Eben, "ain' as peaceable as he is lucky."

HOMEMADE CALENDARS.

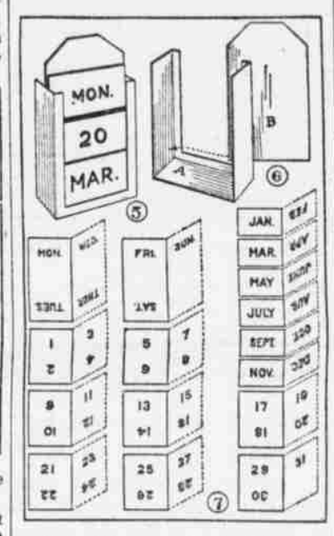
The little desk calendar in Figs. 1 and 2 has a cardboard case (Fig. 3), and six calendar cards (Fig. 4). First make the cards, then the case. The size of your calendar pad will determine the size of the cards. Fig. 4 will give you an idea of the relative size. The card tops must extend above the case as shown. Use a light-weight cardboard or heavy letter paper for the cards. You will see by Fig. 4 that one month of the calendar is pasted upon each side of each card. Cut



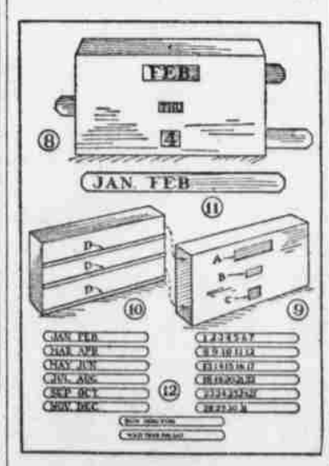
the front of the case from cardboard, with the opening of the right size so there will be a margin of about one-quarter inch around the calendar, and make the margin around the opening about one-half inch wide. Mark out back B with front A as a marker, and glue enough of the strips C along the side and bottom to make a thickness a trifle greater than that of the six calendar cards.

To assemble the case, bind together A and B with paper lapped over and glued to their edges. Paste a piece of tinted paper on the front to conceal the binding strip. Fig. 2 shows how to fasten a cardboard strip to the back of the case to support the calendar.

Perhaps you would prefer a perpetual calendar to the kind just described. The calendar in Fig. 5 requires a small cardboard box for a case (A, Fig. 6). Remove one end of the box, then cut away the bottom, with the exception of a margin of one-quarter inch along the sides and remaining end. Back B (Fig. 6) fits between the box sides, and extends an inch above them. Glue its edges to the sides of the box.



There are sixteen calendar cards (Fig. 7), two for the "days," eight for the "dates," and six for the "months." Cut the "date" cards two-thirds of the length of the "day" cards, and the "month" cards one-half of the length of the "date" cards. The calendar pad from which you cut the "days,"



"dates," and "months" should be in heavy clear type. Arrange and paste the printing in the manner shown in Fig. 7.

The perpetual calendar in Fig. 8 is made of a cardboard box of the kind that slides into a sleeve cover (Figs. 9 and 10). Cut the openings A, B and C (Fig. 9) through the sleeve cover, and paste the three strips D (Fig. 10) upon the box bottom for the "month," "day" and "date" strips to slide upon. Fig. 11 shows the relative length and width of the slide strips, and Fig. 12 the arrangement of the calendar letters and numbers.

The Child Critics.

Parents are living daily before the most critical audience in the world—their child. The small deceit, the loss of temper—all such things are seen by the small critic, and they all color, in later years, his feeling for his parents.—From the Delineator.

True Happiness.

Happy the man who, remote from busy life, is content, like the primitive race of mortals, to plow his paternal lands with his own oxen, freed from all borrowing and lending.—Horace.

HOME TOWN HELPS

LOOK TO THE VACANT LOT

A Little Cleaning Up of the Space Now Will Result in Profit in the Future.

Owners of unimproved property in this city who wish to sell it should take heed of a suggestion that comes from Minneapolis, where the matter has been under practical consideration. This is that any lot of ground offered for sale has a better chance of finding a market if it is kept in attractive order than if neglected and allowed to present an unkempt, unattractive appearance. Of course, as a mere building site, it makes no difference to a prospective purchaser whether a lot is neatly tufted or is a veritable dump laden with trash. Building operations are not deterred by refuse. But there is something psychological in the appeal of a well-kept vacant lot that gives it a "pulling power" over a trash-covered, weed-grown, unsightly place.

The cumulative effect of well-tended vacant properties reaching to a standard of orderliness throughout the city is unmistakable. Every real estate owner with property of this character to sell is interested in attracting the attention of buyers from outside. Such buyers are more surely drawn to a city that presents no unlovely aspects than to one that is peppered with eyesores.

The cost of keeping a vacant lot in order is slight and it should be reckoned by the owner as part of the overhead charge, along with the interest. It has been suggested that this cost may be added to the price of the property when it is sold. However it is borne, whether by the owner or the ultimate purchaser, it is a good investment. It makes for quicker sales and meanwhile for a more attractive city, which in itself is an asset shared by every owner of property.

This is the season to consider this question. Already the preparations for park work are under way. The ground in the public reservations is being raked, trash is being hauled away, and in a few weeks the city will be blossoming. Every owner of a vacant lot should consider his bit of ground as part of the city's park system and put it in order just as carefully as the tree-grown spaces under the care of the government are groomed for the season. The householders are expected to keep their front parkings and lawns up to a certain standard of neatness, and surely those who own land on which there are no improvements should be under the same obligation. — Washington Star.

Have a Garden.

Begin now to think of that little garden in the back yard, everybody who has a back yard. Such a modest enterprise has much to do to restore the harmony of life. If you don't get a radish, a tomato, a bean or a mess of peas, you will get something greater—pure air, sunshine, exercise and companionship with nature, which are a richer crop than all the truck in the garden. It is a great thing to watch things grow. They make a man grow, too; add health and strength to every part of his body; give him a clean conscience; make him love his wife and enjoy her victuals. Tending a little garden makes a good citizen out of a man; gives him better thoughts; makes him kindlier to his neighbors, and gives a gentler accent to his voice. And then, if he should raise anything in the garden, how happy he is to gather it and take it into the kitchen and lay it on the table, saying to his wife: "These are some of our own raising; ain't they fine?" That's life—grander than going to church in an automobile.—Ohio State Journal.

Value of Flower Shows.

Preparations are already under way for flower shows, and it is pertinent to ask, "What is the permanent value to those who attend?" Mere attractions will not permanently endure with any considerable measure of success. They must educate as well. In order to interest you must instruct. All love best what they know most about. The more one is instructed in horticulture the greater will be his appreciation of plants and flowers. Every exhibit should be a bureau of information regarding fundamental knowledge. Every attendant should be a mine of information regarding details. A feast for the eyes will not alone attract the best attendance, but a feast of the mind as well surely will.

Decoration of the Home.

It is not "a matter of taste" when we accept for our home's decoration those forms of beauty which we do not sympathetically understand; it is a matter of intellectual laziness.

We take what is smart for the moment without a question of its fitness and adaptability for our individual needs, and in so doing we lose that greater delight, which is the soul of art and which is our only thorough sincere study and search of the decorative fundamentals upon which the artists and lovers of the beautiful have built.—House and Garden.

Got Her New Hat.

"Why is it," asked the inquisitive husband, "that you never ask anyone if your hat is on straight, as I so often hear other women do?" "Well, if you must know," replied his wife, "it is because I love you so much." "But I fail to see what your love for me has to do with it." "Why, just think how it would disgrace you if I were to call anyone's attention to the only hat I have had in three years." And that's why, on the very next occasion she went out, she appeared in the latest creation of the milliner's art.